

## Message Text

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10

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

----- 097920

O 230822Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 572

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL ASMARA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KHARTOUM 2471

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS OTHER POSTS AS APPROPRIATE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PINS, ET, US

SUBJECT: KAGNEW TWO

REF: STATE 240695 AND 240792; KHARTOUM 2467 AND 2469

BEGIN SUMMARY: EMBOFFS MET OCTOBER 22 WITH KHARTOUM ELF REPS, WHO CLAIMED "FULL AUTHORITY FROM ELF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE." ELF REPS SAID TWO AMERICAN CAPTIVES IN GOOD HEALTH AND WELL CARED FOR BY ELF, BUT ADDED THAT ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS OF CAPTIVITY AFFECTING THEIR MORALE. ELF REPS DENIED ENMITY TOWARD CAPTIVES AND EXPRESSED HOP FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH USG AFTER ERITREAN INDEPENDENCE ACHIEVED. THEY SAID, HOWEVER, THAT CAPTIVES WERE TAKEN BECAUSE USG ASSISTED EPMG. ELF REPS THEN DESCRIBED FOUR "RECOMMENDATIONS" TO USG: EVACUATE KAGNEW; HALT ALL ASSISTANCE TO EPMG; PAY ELF SEVEN MILLION DOLLARS; AND MATERIALLY ASSIST ERITREAN REFUGEES IN SUDAN. AT NO TIME WERE TERMS "DEMANDS" OR "CONDITIONS" USED, NOR WERE ANY THREATS MADE. DCM GAVE USG MESSAGE TO ELF REPS, INCLUDING REITERATION OF USG POSITION AGAINST NEGOTIATION AND BARGAINING WITH ABDUCTORS OF AMERICANS

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ABROAD. MESSAGE WAS CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD AND MEETING ENDED WITH

ELF REPS EXPRESSING HOPE THAT "MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING" WOULD BE REACHED. QUESTION OF SECOND MEETING WAS LEFT OPEN. ELF REPS ASKED THAT TALKS REMAIN SECRET, BUT WE ARE SKEPTICAL ABOUT THEIR INTENTIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. DCM, ACCOMPANIED BY CONSULAR OFFICER, MET AT FORMER'S HOME AT 7:30 P.M. LOCAL OCTOBER 22 FOR ONE HOUR WITH TWO KHARTOUM REPRESENTATIVES OF ELF RPT ELF, WHO WERE DRIVEN TO HOUSE AND LEFT THERE BY SUDANESE OFFICIAL.
2. ELF REPS IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES IN WRITING AS HUMED KULLU, "HEAD OF KHARTOUM OFFICE GIVEN GULL AUTHORITY FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT (E.L.F.)", AND REZENE LEULEKAL. LATTER SAID HE WAS WITH KHARTOUM ELF OFFICE. HUMED SPOKE NO ENGLISH. REZENE DID ALL THE TALKING BUT ALWAYS AFTER GETTING POINTS ONE BY ONE FROM HUMED IN TIGRINYA. DCM AND CONSULAR OFFICERS IDENTIFIED SELVES AND HUMED WROTE DOWN NAMES AND TITLES IN TIGRINYA AS GIVEN (COUNSELOR AND CONSULAR OFFICER).
3. DCM SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT ELF WISHED TO CONVEY A MESSAGE TO US CONCERNING THE AMERICAN PRISONERS. HUMED SAID THAT HE WAS GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET AND DISCUSS THE CASE AND HE HOPED WE COULD REACH A "MAJOR UNDERSTANDING" ABOUT THE CASE. HE SAID HE HAD WANTED TO BRING WITH HIM PERSONALLY AND GIVE TO DCM LETTERS FROM TWO AMERICANS AND THEIR IDENTIFICATION CARDS. INSTEAD HE HAD GIVEN THEM TO SUDANESE GOVERNMENT TO SHOW US. HUMED ASKED WHETHER WE HAD SEEN THEM. DCM SAID HE HAD.
4. DCM INQUIRED ABOUT THE CONDITION AND GENERAL WELFARE OF THE TWO AMERICANS (AS AUTHORIZED BY STATE 240792). HUMED SAID THAT THEY WERE IN GOOD HEALTH AS OF ONE WEEK AGO. WHEN ASKED, HE SAID THAT NEITHER HE NOR REZENE HAD SEEN THEM PERSONALLY BUT THAT THE INFORMATION CAME FROM OTHERS WHO VISITED KHARTOUM ONE WEEK AGO. HUMED CONTINUED, "I WANT TO ASSURE YOU OF THE GOOD CONDITION OF THE TWO MEN, AND THEY WILL BE KEPT IN GOOD CONDITION UNTIL WE HAVE REACHED A MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING WITH THE USG." HE SAID THAT SINCE THEIR "ARREST" ON SEPTEMBER 12, THEY HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO NO

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PHYSICAL HARM BY THEIR CAPTORS. HUMED ADDED THAT LIFE IN THE "FOREST" (I.E., AREA OF CAPTIVITY) IS HARD, AND THE AMERICANS FACE THIS PROBLEM AS MEN PERHAPS USED TO URBAN CONDITIONS. HE SAID THE CULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND PEOPLE NOW SURROUNDING THEM ARE VERY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THEY KNOW: THEREFORE, THEY MAY FEEL ISOLATED AND MORALLY DEPRESSED AS INDICATED IN THEIR LETTERS. THE FOOD OF THE ELF FORCES IS FOREIGN TO THE AMERICANS, SAID HUMED, AND THE ELF HAS BROUGHT THEM FOOD MORE FAMILIAR

TO THEM FROM ASMAR AND KASSALA. HE CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT  
"WE HAVE NOTHING AGAINST THEM" AND CLAIMING THEY LIVE NOT LIKE  
PRISONERS BUT WITH ELF POLITICAL CADRES WHO SPEAK ENGLISH.

5. HUMED THEN SAID THAT THE ELF IS FIGHTING FOR INDEPENDENCE  
AGAINST THE OPPRESSION OF ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT (EPMG).  
IN THE FUTURE, WHEN INDEPENDENCE HAS BEEN ACHIEVED, "WE  
WILL BE HAPPY TO HAVE GOOD DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH USG."  
HE SAID THAT EPMG PUTS OUT FALSE PROPAGANDA CALLING ERITREANS  
"REBELS," WHEN IN FACT THEY ARE A RESISTANCE ORGANIZATION  
FIGHTING TO ESTABLISH SEPARATE NATION.

6. CONTINUING, HUMED ALLEGED THAT USG HAS HELPED EPMG  
ECONOMICALLY, MILITARILY AND POLITICALLY. THIS, HE  
SAID, IS WHY THE AMERICANS WERE TAKEN: "WE ASK NO ASSISTANCE,  
BUT WE ASK THAT YOU CEASE AID TO EPMG AND GIVE POLITICAL  
SUPPORT TO THE ERITREAN REVOLUTION. EVEN IF YOU ARE NOT  
READY TO ASSIT ERITREANS POLITICALLY, PLEASE OBSERVE THE  
BRUTAL ACTION OF THE EPMG AGAINST CHILDREN, WOMEN AND CROPS."  
HE ADDED THAT ERITREANS SEE AMERICAN UNIFORMS, AMMUNITION  
AND ARMS BEING USED BY ETHIOPIAN FORCES, INCLUDING F-5  
AIRCRAFT THAT BOMBARD ERITREAN PEOPLE: "THIS IS WHAT WE ASK  
YOU TO SEE AND STOP."

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

----- 101689

O 230822Z OCT 75 ZFG

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 573

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL ASMARA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KHARTOUM 2471

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS OTHER POSTS AS APPROPRIATE

7. HUMED THEN SAID HE WOULD COME TO THE MAIN POINT OF THE DISCUSSION, WHICH HE IS UNDER ORDERS TO MAKE BY "THE HEADS OF THE REVOLUTION." WITHOUT USING THE WORDS "DEMANDS," AND LATER LABELING THEM "RECOMMENDATIONS," HE ENUMERATED THE FOLLOWING: (A) EVACUATE KAGNEW STATION IN ASMARA; (B) STOP ECONOMIC, MILITARY, TECHNICAL AND POLITICAL AID TO THE EPMG; (C) GIVE TO THE ELF SEVEN MILLION AMERICAN DOLLARS, WHICH IS THE EQUIVALENT VALUE OF USG AID GIVEN TO EPMG AND USED BY EPMG TO CONFRONT ERITREAN PEOPLE; AND (D) FURNISH MATERIAL ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING FOOD AND MEDICINES, TO ERITREAN REFUGEES IN THE SUDAN, WHMANUMBER AS MANY AS 100,000. (ACTUALLY, HUMED GAVE FIRST THREE POINTS ABOVE AND SAID THAT A FOURTH POINT WOULD BE REVEALED AT A SECOND MEETING. AFTER DCM MADE POINTS AS DESCRIBED BELOW, HOWEVER, HUMED, AFTER SOME DISCUSSION WITH REZENE, ADDED THE FOURTH POINT.)

8. FINALLY, HUMED SAID THAT FOUR DAYS AGO THE ELF HAD MAILED ONE LETTER FROM EACH OF THE AMERICANS TO THEIR FAMILIES IN THE U.S. HE DID NOT REMEMBER EXACTLY TO WHOM LETTERS HAD BEEN ADDRESSED.

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9. DCM, READING  
VERBATIM FROM TYPED INSTRUCTIONS COPIED  
FROM PARA 2 (A) THROUGH (E) OF STATE 240695 TO UNDERScore  
THE PRECISE AND RESTRICTIVE NATURE OF HIS INSTRUCTIONS AND  
AUTHORITY, MADE THE POINTS CONTAINED THEREIN, PARAPHRASING  
CLOSELY ON FEW OCCASIONS WHEN REZENE INDICATED LESS THAN  
FULL UNDERSTANDING. DCM HANDED OVER COPIES OF ONLY THOSE  
MESSAGES FROM FAMILIES OF  
STRICKLAND AND BOWIDOWICZ, CALLING  
ATTENTION TO MESSAGE ABOUT BOWIDOWICZ'S ASTHMATIC CONDITION  
(STATE 240623) AND ASKING THAT MESSAGE BE DELIVERED TO ELF  
LEADERSHIP AND CAPTORS OF AMERICANS. DCM SAID HE WOULD CONVEY  
POINTS MADE BY HUMED TO USG. BECAUSE HUMED HAD MADE  
SPECIFIC DEMANDS OF USG, DCM EXPLAINED CLEARLY USG POLICY  
OF REFUSING FIRMLY TO NEGOTIATE OR BARGAIN WITH ABDUCTORS  
OF AMERICANS ABROAD AND RESTATED USG POSITION THAT  
AMERICANS SHOULD BE IMMEDIATELY AND UNCONDITIONALLY RELEASED.

10. BEFORE PARTING, HUMED SAID THAT DCM NOW HAD ALL  
"RECOMMENDATIONS" TO BE GIVEN TO USG AND THAT HE HOPED "WE  
WILL REACH MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING." HE SAID THAT HE DESIRED  
OUR DISCUSSIONS TO REMAIN SECRET. DCM NODDED IN AGREEMENT.  
DCM ALSO AGREED THAT, IF EITHER PARTY DESIRED TO COMMUNICATE  
FURTHER WITH THE OTHER, IT COULD BE ARRANGED VIA OUR MUTUAL

SUDANESE CONTACT.

11. COMMENT: HUMED AND REZENE WERE CALM THROUGHOUT, EVINCING MILD AGITATION ONLY WHEN, LISTENING TO DCM'S REITERATION OF USG POLICY ON NEGOTIATIONS AND BARGAINING, THEY REACHED DECISION TO MAKE FOURTH "RECOMMENDATON." WE CAN GUESS ONLY THAT ORIGINAL PLAN TOHOLD FOURTH POINT IN RESERVE FOR SUBSEQUENT MEETING WAS INTENDED TO ENSURE THAT DIALOGUE WOULD NOT BE CONFINED TO A SINGLE SESSION.

12. HUMED NEVER USED WORDS "DEMANDS" OR "CONDITIONS" WHEN SPEAKING OF CAPTIVES OR "RECOMMENDATIONS," AND HE MADE NO THREATS, IMPLIED OR OTHERWISE. LIAISON BETWEEN "RECOMMENDATIONS" AND CAPTIVES' RELEASE WAS MADE INSTEAD BY PLEDGE TO KEEP CAPTIVES IN GOOD CONDITION UNTIL MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING REACHED BETWEEN ELF AND USG.  
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13. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT HUMED, WHO TOOK CAREFUL NOTES, FULLY UNDERSTOOD DCM'S PRESENTATION, IN VIEW OF HUMED'S REPORTED TALK WITH REUTERS CORRESPONDENT OCTOBER 22 (KHARTOUM 2469) AND LIKELY FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW, HOWEVER, WE DO NOT CREDIT TOO HIGHLY HIS STATED DESIRE TO KEEP OUR DISCUSSION SECRET. WE ARE OF COURSE SUSPICIOUS AS WELL OF HUMED'S ALLEGED INABILITY TO PRODUCE AMERICANS' ID CARDS AND LETTERS (OR COPIES), SINCE EARLIER INFORMATION (KHARTOUM 2469) INDICATES THAT SUDANESE OFFICIALS HAD INDEED RETURNED ID CARDS TO HUMED PRIOR TO MEETING WITH DCM.

14. WE WERE IMPRESSED BY LENGTHY EFFORT BY HUMED TO ASSURE US THAT AMERICANS WERE AS WELL AS ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS PERMIT AND THAT ELF HAS DONE AND WILL DO WHAT IT CAN TO OVERCOME EVEN THOSE ADVERSE CONDITIONS. SHOULD DEPARTMENT DECIDE A SECOND MEETING WOULD BE USEFUL, SUGGEST INSTRUCTIONS INCLUDE EXPRESSION OF USG PLEASURE OVER ASSURANCES THAT AMERICANS WILL BE KEPT SAFE AND SOUND.

15. IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARA 5 OF STATE 240695, AMBASSADOR PLANS BRIEF KIBEIDA OCTOBER 25 UNLESS INSTRUCTED OTHERWISE.  
END COMMENT.  
BREWER

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** WELFARE & WHEREABOUTS, POLICIES, PRISONERS RELEASE, MEETINGS, LIBERATION FRONTS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 23 OCT 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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06 JUL 2006

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**Secure:** OPEN  
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**TAGS:** PFOR, PINT, PINS, ET, US, ELF  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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